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SERVICE

NEWS

ISSUED FOR THE STAFF OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION
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The SCS--all of it, the whole organization--has been designated a "national defense agency."

That's good news. We felt pretty bad, a few months back, when 13 other bureaus of the USDA were named "defense agencies" and only two SCS divisions--Cartographic and Land Acquisition--were on the list. They certainly belonged there, but many of us felt that the entire Service should have been named.

Now it has been named, after a restatement of our case, and SCS joins the list of "defense agencies", lock, stock, and barrel.

But let's get that straight. There's apt to be a lot of misunderstanding as to what this "defense" designation means. Who said we were a defense agency? Just exactly what does it mean? What effect will it have?

First, we were designated by the Civil Service Commission. It means that SCS will enjoy certain privileges and priorities in the handling of personnel matters. No more than that! It does not mean, for example, that SCS personnel is deferred from selective service. It does not mean

that SCS is going to share automatically in defense appropriations. It does not mean that SCS is as important in the defense program as the Army or the Navy.

The effect will be felt, in other words, only in the way our personnel affairs are handled. "Defense agencies," for example, have priority in moving personnel actions through the Civil Service Commission, in drawing from registers, and in similar matters.

Quite aside from the practical effect, however, we can get a real psychological lift out of being added to the "defense" list. It means, after all, that the Civil Service Commission feels, as we do, that the job of safeguarding this country's land resource is an important part of the program of total defense for the nation. We knew it all along--this just clinches it. We can take a good deal of satisfaction in that, certainly. And, as the brass hats say, it ought to be good for morale.

We haven't space enough to print them all, but some of the major reasons why the program of the SCS is essential to total defense were set forth as follows by the Service in asking to be put on the "defense agency" list:

It provides protection for the source of national food and fibre supplies.

It is helping to make the basic adjustments which are necessary to prevent an economic collapse in agriculture as a re-

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WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

(Continued from page 1)

sult of war conditions throughout the world.

It helps to increase the production of foods needed for national health and tends to reduce the production of surplus crops.

It establishes the use of land on a basis of maximum efficiency.

It provides, through a close working relationship with local soil conservation districts, an exceptional opportunity to advance immediate and long-range adjustments in land use over a wide area.

It provides, through land capability surveys, a guide to efficient use of land from the standpoint of physical characteristics.

It provides a mechanism for training personnel for defense responsibilities.

The Forum would welcome letters of comment about these points. Perhaps you see other defense implications in our work. Let us hear about them, if you do.

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At the request of the Chief, representatives of regions 2 and 4 spent several days in Washington, meeting with a committee to consider activities of the Service in the cotton and tobacco sections of the South and to recommend ways and means by which SCS may cooperate most effectively with a Department long-range program designed to meet war and post-war conditions in the South. Recommendations of the committee are now being drafted for presentation to the Chief.

Members of the committee include Robert M. Ross and R. Y. Bailey of Region 2, James W. Sargent of Region 4, C. R. Enlow, T. B. Chambers, N. R. Bear, T. L. Gaston, L. E. Partain, E. H. Reed, A. E. Fivaz, and F. Rankin.

WYOMING LEGISLATURE

VOTES ON DISTRICT LAW

Both houses of the Wyoming legislature have voted favorably upon a soil conservation districts law and the bill is now awaiting the action of the Governor. The vote of 45 to 10 in the House and 19 to 5 in the Senate indicates considerable interest on the part of the legislators in the problems of soil conservation.

The question of a districts law for Wyoming has figured prominently in many farmers' meetings during the past three years. At the last session of the legislature in 1939 a districts bill was introduced and passed in the Senate but failed to pass the House by one vote. In the two-year interval land owners have been getting better acquainted with what a soil conservation district is and, if the Governor signs the bill in the near future, they are expected to get busy right away setting up districts.

CARTOGRAPHERS RUSH

WORK ON MAP FOR ARMY

SCS cartographers at Beltsville are rushing to finish a job for the War Department which calls for an aerial map of a territory 200 miles square where the Army expects to set up a new artillery range in the East. Photos for the map are being reproduced from films of the area which SCS made 2 or 3 years ago. The completed map will consist of 175 such photos pieced together.

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Announcement this week of the lucky folks who passed the District of Columbia Bar examination includes two employees of SCS--Irene G. Kolin of Personnel Management Division and Earl Hillstrand of Farm Planning and Management Division. Congratulations certainly are in order for these two, especially when we realize that of the 703 law students who took the exam, only 249 made passing grades.

RADIO COMMENTATOR INTERVIEWS THE CHIEF

Did you know there is a soil erosion problem in the District of Columbia? Leon Pearson, news commentator for Washington's radio station WOL, didn't know it either, but he learned recently about it and other things when he stopped to call on the Chief during a newsgathering jaunt around town. Mr. Pearson told about his visit with Dr. Bennett during his broadcast on February 10. Here's what he had to say:

"My leg work has also taken me to Wallace's former bailiwick, the Department of Agriculture. There I called on Dr. H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, and this tall, burly, white-haired man said something about soil conservation, not in terms of the dust bowl or the deep south, but in terms of the District of Columbia. Believe it or not, we have soil conservation problems right here within the District line.

"Dr. Bennett said, 'If I ever forget the consequence of soil erosion, all I have to do is look out this window,' and he swung around and looked across the wharves and the channel to the Potomac. 'Right over there is the new National Airport, being erected on earth reclaimed from the river bottom, earth that was once the top soil of many a farm along the upper reaches of the river.'

"To be sure, most of the soil conservation work is done far from Washington, but Dr. Bennett said there is one farm right here in the District--and a property of the District--which presents a bad soil erosion problem. It is the National Training School for Boys, where the lands were being badly washed by unchecked erosion, until Soil Conservation put up some remedial dams.

"When Dr. Bennett appeared before the House Appropriation Committee the other day, it was one of the most colorful

REGION 3 RADIO DRAMA STARTS IN FOURTH YEAR

"Fortunes Washed Away", Region 3's dramatized radio series that started as a 20-week experiment, will go into its fourth year next month.

Approximately 10,000 soil conservation bulletins have been distributed as a result of mail sent to the program. This mail has come from 33 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada.

sessions they have had. He came into the room, dragging his plows behind him. 'They hardly had room enough for my plows,' says Bennett. 'I wanted to show them that new methods of farming must be adopted to save the soil.' The prize exhibit among Bennett's plows was a new type of blade which cuts under the soil without turning it over. It is called a sub-surface plow. The blade simply runs along under the surface, cutting the roots and loosening the soil, without turning it over for exposure to the drying and eroding effect of the sun and the wind.

"In other words, Bennett was illustrating the old adage, 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' They are already at work to cure erosion by dam construction and by contour planting, but in addition to the cure, there must be prevention. Bennett thinks he has an ounce of prevention in this new sub-surface plow. It is completely revolutionary. Ever since man first thrust a crooked stick into the ground, the accepted method in plowing has been to loosen the soil and turn it over. Now Bennett, the revolutionist, wants to loosen the soil without turning it over. In his appearance before the committee, Bennett was persuasive. He is a man who conveys his enthusiasm. He is as keen about this new plow as a boy with a new electric train. I am sure he will get the twenty million dollars he wants for continuation of Soil Conservation Service."

FERTILITY

(Reprinted from *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon)

Most of us notice the earth, and what is happening to it, only locally. We notice the garden in which we spade, and perhaps the gardens of our neighbors; or we notice our own farm and a few others around. Our viewpoint is too restricted for us to draw wide conclusions, or sense the manner in which problems of the soil have raised nations and cast them down throughout human history. A trickle of water carries away a corner of our garden; we do not stop to think that similar trickles have washed away empires.

Dr. W. C. Lowdermilk of the Department of Agriculture, on the other hand, has made it his life's work to study soil from the world standpoint. He observed and experimented extensively in Asia, particularly China. When the present war began, he was completing a study of countries bordering on the Mediterranean, in Europe, Asia and Africa. And the story which he tells, based upon these researches, makes a Hollywood thriller pale and bloodless by comparison. When he flashes upon the screen a little grove of trees hidden in rocky, barren slopes, and tells us this is the principal remnant of the great forest of Lebanon, which Solomon had logged off, we are ready to hang out the no trespassing sign on the forests of the Pacific Northwest. When he leads us along the route of the present fighting in north Africa, showing the ruins of vast cities where there is only sand now, and fellaheen plowing the site of Carthage, we are in a mood to start worrying over the rapidly eroding hills of the Palouse.

And, after all, there is no quality in American soil which makes it more immune to wind and water than the soil of China or Tunisia. In the Mississippi valley we have the greatest natural basin on earth. But under cultivation it is exposed to the

CCC AND CONSERVATION

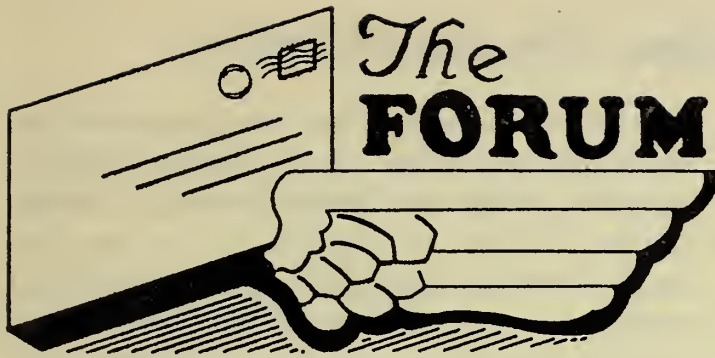
The rapidly expanding activities of the soil conservation district office at Chamberlain, S. D., are being facilitated by the men of the local CCC camp. The enrollee crews have, in the past year, constructed 66 water reservoirs, removed 20,347 rods of blow dirt accumulations from fence lines, and constructed 71,725 rods of fence.

The district has doubled its activities during the past year. Where, 12 months ago, 154 cooperative agreements had been signed, 307 now are handled from the Chamberlain office. The agreements provide for the rotation of crops on 33,948 acres of cultivated land, and the adjustment of grazing on 66,716 acres of range.

FUTURE OF THE FARM

Secretary Wickard writes on "The Future of the Farm" in the February 3 issue of *The New Republic*. In the article, he considers the complexities of the impact of technological advances on agriculture. He advocates a continuance of technological progress, but also believes that the shocks resulting from its rapid march be cushioned as in industry. The solution of agriculture's problems, he contends, should be along the lines of the problems: through county land-use planning, reforms in our system of land tenure, soil conservation, research laboratories, subsistence and security farming, Government programs and changes in farm management.

old enemies and it contracts from the edges. Throughout the rest of the nation, the problem is still more immediate, because the land is less level and usually the soil is less deep. Forests are removed, and grass is plowed under, and everywhere wind and water start gnawing. Erosion begins carrying away the soil which erosion had created through the ages, but which, until now, forests and grass had pinned down.



EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: Three cheers for the "Washington Correspondent" in the February 20 issue of SERVICE NEWS. I would go him one better and say *"What particular object can there be in conserving the soil except as it benefits 'those who till the soil' and the 'surrounding community' or at least some community—perhaps one 'down stream.'"* There is no point in saving the soil just for the sake of saving it. Only through the use of the "saved" soil can there be much benefit as I see it, and use of the soil brings us into the economic sphere. I have no doubt the "Correspondent" had this in mind. Perhaps he was afraid to shift the emphasis too quickly for fear the shock would be too great for some to stand. However, I think, back in the recesses of our minds, we all have the same end results in mind but they are not always reflected in our statements and actions.

How about presenting some actual "clear-cut, factual, balance sheets" in the SERVICE NEWS or in the SOIL CONSERVATION if we have any to present? If we do not have any, it surely is time we drew up a few. And after convincing each other, by the use of such "balance sheets," that conservation of the soil is economically sound we should then proceed to convince others--the farmers, farm leaders, and Congressmen mentioned by the "Correspondent". First we must convince ourselves. Where is the evidence? I am told we do not have any, even for the purpose of convincing ourselves. That is an unhealthy situation.

By getting behind our organization as now constituted we should be able to quick-

ly and effectively gather plenty of evidence. Let's pull together toward that goal without further delay.

H.K.P.

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John Cotton, Extension Soil Conservationist of College Park, Md., has written in about the motion picture, "The Heritage We Guard." We reprint his communication

"We wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and to congratulate those who produced the motion picture 'The Heritage We Guard.' It is a beautiful film, tells an excellent story, and gives the field men a much needed break in getting closer to the people attending meetings.

"Instead of getting the customary thanks after the showing of this picture, we get a real applause and are often asked to return to another meeting to give more information. This picture creates and holds a lot of interest.

"To field men who are charged with the responsibility of putting over the conservation program, there is nothing more satisfying than to have people interested in soil and wildlife conservation. The showing of this film isn't a job, it is an opportunity.

"We have used this film with particular success in some Southern Maryland schools which gave us a much needed opportunity to get next to the pupils, and in turn encourage them to have their parents participate in the Soil Conservation District Referendum. Judging from the number of votes cast, we were particularly successful.

"We, therefore, would like to have you convey our thanks to those who produced the film and let them share in the good that it is doing in Maryland."

NATIONAL DEFENSE NOTES

Under arrangements approved by the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union, the Pan-American Soil Conservation Commission, of which H. H. Bennett is a member, is expected to take steps to encourage the expansion of soil conservation programs in the 21 American republics, as well as exchange trained personnel and technical information with a view to coordinating conservation problems on a continental basis.

The Army Air Corps has decided to recommend development of a new military air field and airdrome on the Beltsville Experimental Farm. The new field will serve as part of the air defense of Washington, along with Bolling Field and the naval field at Anacostia. The USDA had previously agreed to place the land at the Army's disposal.

Rural youth and adults are receiving special training in 3,000 rural polytechnic schools, scattered throughout the United States, now cooperating in the national defense mechanical training program. By July 1, it is expected the number of schools offering these special courses will total between 6,000 and 8,000. In these courses, usually held at night, rural youths as well as adults are given instruction in the general field of mechanics to help them fit into defense industries.

The Agricultural Division of the Defense Commission is beginning a study of the supply of items used in agricultural production, including supplies of fertilizer and the possible demands of the defense program on the supplies normally taken by the farms of the Nation.

The War Department has announced that Private Ogden Delmar Pinkerton is the first soldier entering military service under the Selective Service Act to receive a commission--first lieutenant in the Medical Corps Reserve.

FSA is rushing plans for construction of 1,900 dwellings at Greenbelt, Md., to house some of the defense workers coming to Washington and vicinity. The new development is a continuation of the present town plan which provided for three times the present population. The selection of Greenbelt for the housing will mean a considerable saving to the Government since there will be no cost for land acquisition and basic community and recreational facilities are already available.

A national nutrition congress in Washington early this spring, attended by representatives of all Federal and State agencies as well as professional and technical groups engaged in diet and nutrition activities, will touch off the national defense diet and nutrition campaign to make this country healthy and strong. Details of the meeting are being worked out under the supervision of Food Coordinator McNutt, with the aid of Dr. Helen Mitchell, Nutrition Consultant, recently transferred to the Coordinator's Office from the Extension Service, and Miss Gay Shepperson, assistant to the Coordinator.

From Berlin, the UP says that a chemical firm has devised a method of fire-proofing whole forests against incendiary raids, according to semi-official sources. In rapid succession, two kinds of chemical bombs are dropped in forests to create a gas. After three weeks, in which the gas impregnates all trees, planes drop huge quantities of a white substance, basis of which is ordinary table salt. This powder reacts on the gas film on trees and forms a substance which, it is claimed, fire-proofs the forests.

Warning that America is passing through a period of economic distress, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in an address before the National Christian Mission, declared the nation no longer can afford to be "a pioneer wasteful country" and must "preserve our land and our forests."

LEGISLATIVE ROUND-UP

This week we again list some of the bills recently introduced in Congress which may be of interest to SCS workers:

H. R. 3457 by Mr. Lea, Calif.: To authorize preliminary examination and survey of Petaluma Creek, Calif., for flood control, run-off and water-flow retardation, and soil-erosion prevention.

S. 910 by Mr. Brown, Mich.: To promote the mining for oil and gas deposits in certain submarginal lands owned by the U. S. in Michigan.

H. R. 3394 by Mr. Sumners, Tex.: To authorize the Attorney General to grant easements to States over lands belonging to the U. S. under his supervision and control.

H. R. 3103 by Mr. Welchel, Ga.: To make non-relief veterans eligible for admission to the CCC or other Government works.

S. 505 by Mr. Sheppard, Tex.: To provide for payment of employees of the U. S. for military leave when ordered to active duty.

H. R. 2603 by Mr. Robinson, Utah: To permit sales of land under the Reclamation Act in parcels exceeding 160 acres to one person, when such sales are to the advantage of the U. S.

H. R. 2234 by Mr. Case, S. Dak.: To provide for payments to counties to reimburse them for loss of tax receipts on account of the use of certain land by the U. S.

H. R. 1805 by Mr. Andersen, Minn.: To authorize a preliminary examination and survey of the inlets and outlets to Lake Hendricks, S. D. and Minn. for run-off and water-flow retardation, and soil-erosion prevention.

H. R. 1770 by Mr. Engelbright, Calif.: To authorize establishment and maintenance of an experimental range in California for conducting research in management of lands for sheep grazing.

S. J. Res. 16 by Mr. Wagner, N. Y.: To establish a post-emergency economic advisory commission to study problems likely to confront the Nation upon termination of the present defense emergency and to formulate a comprehensive program for full utilization of America's resources and improving economic well-being for the people, with authority to utilize the services and facilities of the executive departments.

H. R. 572 by Mr. Doxey, Miss.: To promote sustained-yield forest management in order (a) to stabilize communities, forest industries, employment, and taxable forest wealth; (b) to assure continuous and ample supply of forest products; and (c) to secure the benefits of forests in regulation of water supply and stream flow, prevention of soil erosion, amelioration of climate, and preservation of wildlife.

H. R. 620 by Mr. Pierce, Oreg.: To authorize a preliminary examination and survey of Silvies River and its tributaries, Oregon, for flood control, run-off and water-flow retardation, and soil-erosion prevention.

H. R. 19 by Mr. Bland, Va.: To authorize a preliminary examination and survey of Garden Creek, Va., for flood control, run-off and water-flow retardation, and soil-erosion prevention.

H. R. 1037 by Mr. Peterson, Ga.: To establish a national land policy and to provide homesteads for actual farm families.

H. R. 626 by Mr. Randolph, W. Va.: To increase the compensation of employees in the Federal Service and establish a minimum salary of \$1,200.

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OFF THE PRESS

The report of the Soil Conservation Service in the USDA Yearbook has been translated into Spanish and reprinted in the December issue of *Revista del Instituto de Defensa del Cafe de Costa Rica*.

"Fire--Conservation's Worst Enemy" by Forest V. Durand, February *The Kentucky Sportsman*.

"Application of the Erosion Equation to Strip Crop Planning" by R. W. Cerdel and R. E. Allen, February *Agricultural Engineering*.

"Crops and Dams Protect a Watershed" by Emerson Wolfe, February *Agricultural Engineering*.

"Minnesota's Woodland Caribou" by J. Manweiler, January *The Conservation Volunteer*.

"Wisconsin Leads the Way in Rural Zoning" by Kenneth S. Davis has been accepted for publication by *Better Crops With Plant Food* and will appear sometime next summer.

A discussion by C. S. Jarvis and Howard W. Brod of Katharine Clarke-Hafstad's paper on "Reliability of Station-Year Rainfall-Frequency Determinations" has been published in the February issue of the *Proceedings, American Society of Civil Engineers*.

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Representative A. J. Johnson of Illinois has introduced a bill in Congress which would authorize a memorial plaque in the Department of Agriculture commemorating the invention of the steel plow by John Deere in 1837.

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Chairman Sol Bloom of the Foreign Affairs Committee has interpreted "defense articles" in the Lend-Lease Bill to include farm products.

The following bulletins are off the press and available upon request:

"Terrace Construction with Small Equipment in the South" by W. A. Weld and P. M. Price. Unnumbered Publication.

"Range Conservation Practices for the Great Plains" by B. W. Allred. Miscellaneous Publication No. 410.

FIELD MEMORANDA

Issued February 15 - 25

986 Fingerprint Charts. (Quotes memorandum from Department Director of Personnel re privacy for individuals executing fingerprint charts.)

976-A Rendering Assistance to Drainage or Irrigation Enterprises Located Outside of Soil Conservation Districts and Approved Soil Conservation Service Work Areas. (Also supplements Field Memorandum 977.)

966-A Personnel Information Sheet, Form 3464a. (Additional information re completion of this form.)

979-A Implication of E. M. 979 Concerning the Forestry Phase of Farm Planning. (Letter quoted in memorandum not intended to prescribe a limitation on the scope of forestry assistance.)

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The water facilities program of SCS last year aided 2,500 families in the 17 semi-arid Western States. With technical aid furnished by the Service and financial help from FSA, facilities such as wells, windmills, stockponds, and water-spreading systems were constructed on 1,600 farms and ranches.